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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001930

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DEPARTMENT FOR D, AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, SE NATSIOS, NSC
FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON, ADDIS ABABA PLEASE PASS TO USAU

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TAGS: [KPKO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: VP TAHA: AMERICA CAN ACHIEVE ITS GOALS IN SUDAN
BUT NOT BY THREATENING OR IGNORING US

REF: A. KHARTOUM 1912

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 1709

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: VP Ali Osman Taha sees steady progress on the CPA, even on Abyei, entering a decisive phase next week. The Sudanese Government remains deeply suspicious of American intentions and believes that its "improved behavior" in recent months has not been appreciated by the United States which continues to ignore Northern leaders, especially Taha and President Al-Bashir, and treat Sudan in a piecemeal fashion rather than as a whole. End Summary.

NEXT WEEK DECISIVE FOR CPA?

[1](#)2. (C) CDA Fernandez met Sudanese Vice-President Ali Osman Taha on December 6 in a wide-ranging discussion which began with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and ended with a familiar litany of Sudanese complaints about US policy. Taha began by talking about the relative progress being made in the ongoing talks between his National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) in the past few days. The Presidency (President Al-Bashir, First Vice President Salva Kiir, and Taha) had met for three straight days and re-energized the 6-person committee to operationalize the November 2 agreement (reftel b). The focus was on solving outstanding issues related to security arrangements, elections and census, and border demarcation. Both the six-person committee and the Joint Defense Board (meeting on December 6) were to complete their work by next week for review by the Presidency on December 11.

[1](#)3. (C) While Abyei was not solved the focus was on securing agreement on an interim administration for the region before final resolution. They also discussed improving the political environment and working on eliminating the "poisonous media atmosphere" that exists between the two sides. One concrete step was to set up a plan to have President Al-Bashir visit Southern states and First Vice President Kiir to tour Northern ones to build confidence in the presidency and in unity.

[1](#)4. (C) Taha then asked CDA on how the US saw the confrontation between the two CPA partners. CDA provided him with the text of the Secretary's December 5 remarks on CPA in Addis Ababa. He noted that our private message to both sides is the same as our public message. "We want to see full CPA implementation and no return to war," that is our basic policy. "If both sides are happy with the CPA, then we are

happy," he added noting that we have a special interest in seeing Abyei solved since this was an American compromise. The US thinks that the ABC (Abyei Boundary Commission) Report is fine as written but if that is unacceptable to one side, and the two sides can agree on a mutually acceptable compromise that is fine with us. We are concerned about having this problem linger unsolved over time.

15. (C) VP Taha then talked about the bilateral relationship between the US and Sudan. He started by noting that the NCP signed the CPA because it believed and believes in peace "not because of promises made to us by America." But the fact that the US had promised to do some things, like remove Sudan from the terrorism list, when the CPA was signed in 2005 did affect the bilateral relationship and this was a view held by Sudanese in general, not just the NCP, but opposition parties and even many Southerners. The US had very little credibility in Sudan and the same was true throughout the Muslim and Arab world, and even much of Africa. Sudanese public opinion was very angry at the unfair treatment by the US and even though the Charge had been able to touch a cord with the Sudanese people, "this was not going to be enough by itself." This was the view of the Sudanese Government as a whole, there were no bickering factions in the regime when it came to a "deep disappointment about the United States," everyone feels this. The Sudanese Government appreciates some statements the US has made over the past few months but what matters is "actions not words, a phrase Americans like to use." We believe that this axiom applies to both sides, you and us, he emphasized. In spite of everything, all the disappointment, the Sudanese wanted to understand the Americans, and see if relations could be improved.

16. (C) CDA Fernandez responded that the U.S. had indeed not kept some promises made to Sudan when the CPA was signed but

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that had been due to the violence in Darfur. This year there had been some American rethinking about Sudan and planning about positive engagement between our two countries when Sudan accepted UNSCR 1769 but recent Sudanese obstructionism had given us pause. Why these tortuous games with TCC suggestions from the UN? There were also the threats against IDP camps like Kalma, the urgent need to renew the Moratorium for Humanitarian NGOs in Darfur, and now rumors of Sudanese threats against American companies like PAE and Dyncorp providing services in Darfur.

YOU CAN GET IT IF YOU REALLY WANT

17. (C) CDA noted that the Sudanese had also blocked CODELS since May, "even though you have a big problem with them" and prevented materials for our new embassy being allowed in. If you have complaints about us, CDA continued, our complaints about you would be pages long. We accept the slowness in UNAMID deployment is not entirely your fault but you have zero credibility in the West and just when the West thinks that perhaps you have changed, Sudan goes back to the usual games of delay and deception with the international community. CDA added that while the relationship between the US and Sudan was not as bad as it was nine months ago, it could swiftly deteriorate again if these festering issues are not addressed, and quickly.

18. (C) VP Taha continued by noting that "all these things that you say America wants, on Darfur, on CPA and elections, all of them are quite possible" but not if all you have to offer is threatening and ignoring us. How are you going to get them if you don't engage with us? He said that the American way of treating Sudan, the Sudanese Government, and the especially the political leadership "was deeply wounding to us and to Sudanese public opinion." The US finds some parts or officials acceptable and some you treat as pariahs. "This leads us to believe that you intend to weaken and destroy us," he said. America could show some respect for

Sudanese sovereignty and for the framework of the Sudanese Government, the authority of the state and its officials. It is almost as if the US is more interested in keeping a series of accusations open against Sudan rather than engaging with Sudan to find real solutions.

¶9. (C) "What we have asked is not so hard," CDA responded. These are all things that you have promised someone, the UN, the SPLM, the Sudanese people that you would do. We want you to keep your word. Taha responded that "we want the same thing from you." He noted that CDA had said relations had been even worse earlier in the year, "haven't we (Sudan) come a long way since then? Aren't there more troops arriving in Darfur all the time? Isn't there humanitarian progress, isn't the violence down from past years in Darfur? Didn't we to Sirte ready to negotiate? "And what have we gotten from you, not much". CDA agreed there had been some progress over the year but not enough and not consistently so that, at best, the picture would look as "mixed" to the outside world.

¶10. (C) Comment: Despite the somewhat critical comments back and forth, it was a cordial meeting, almost entirely in Arabic which cushioned some of the harsher language. Taha was very much on message for the NCP and he is right that compared to the outright defiance and threats (and actual increased violence in Darfur in late 2006 - early 2007), the Sudanese regime since this summer has been relatively well behaved (in Sudanese terms). But going from terrible to just bad behavior is simply not good enough for a regime with such a dubious track record. At the very least, the meeting hammered home that if the GOS continues the way it is going it will never break the cycle of distrust it has created with the international community, and especially with Washington. End comment.

FERNANDEZ